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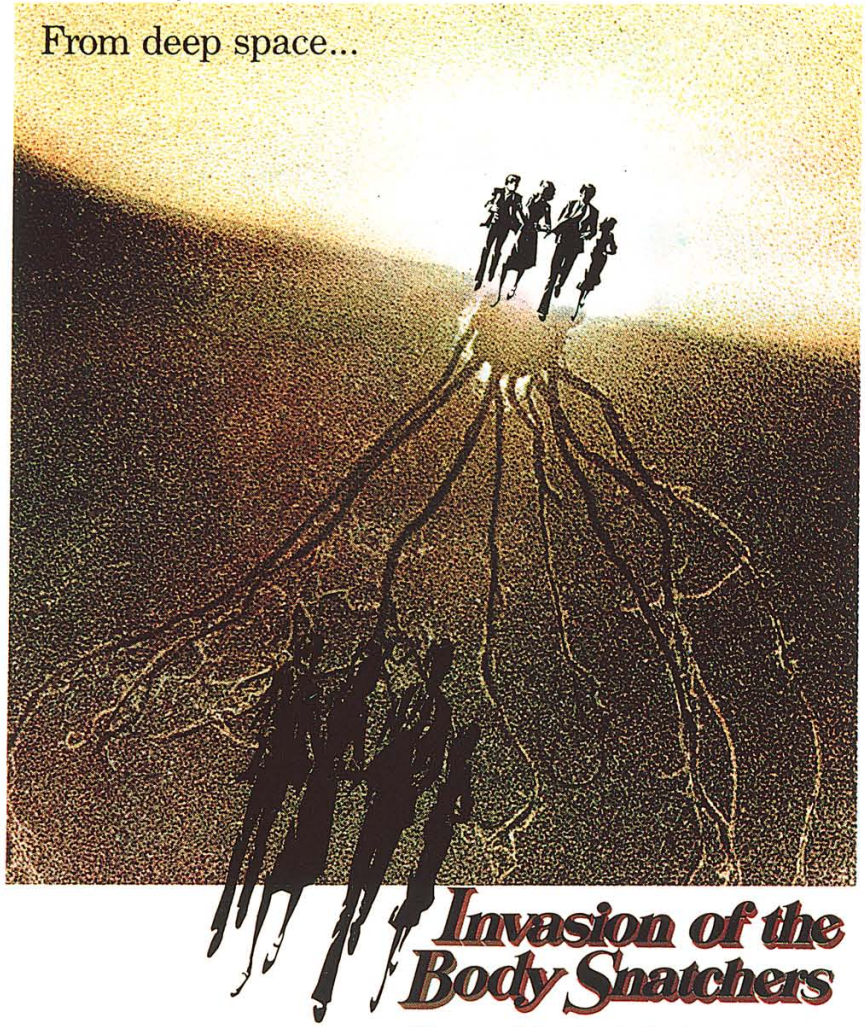

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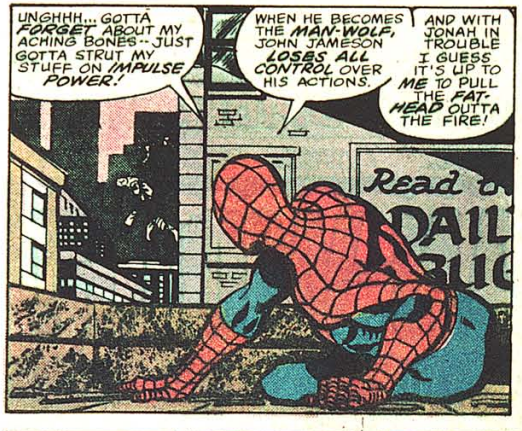

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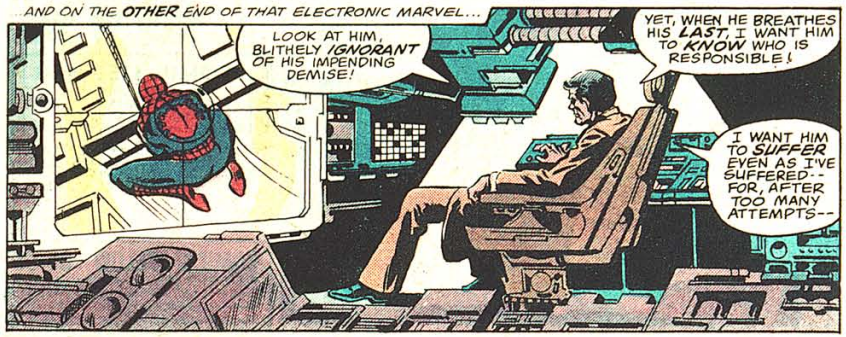

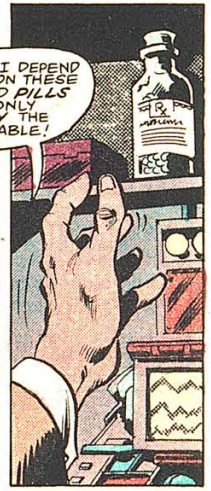

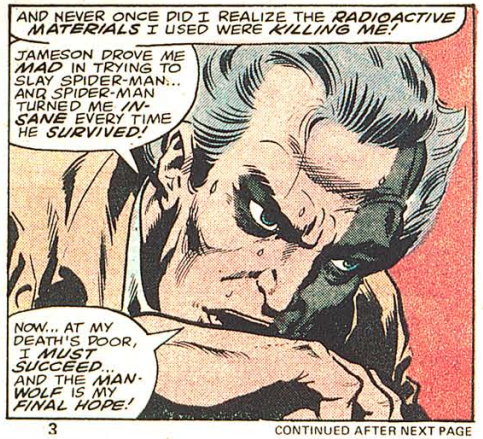

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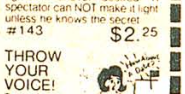

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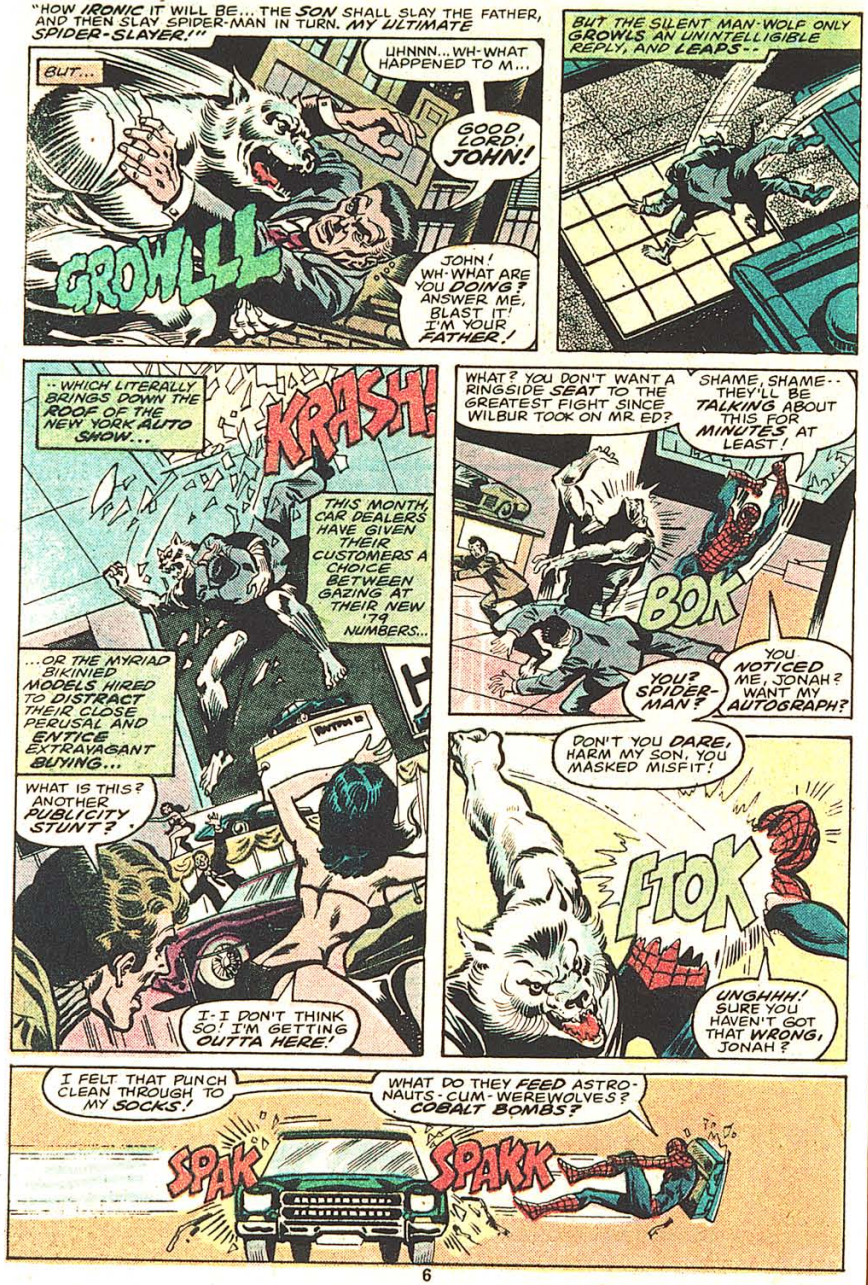

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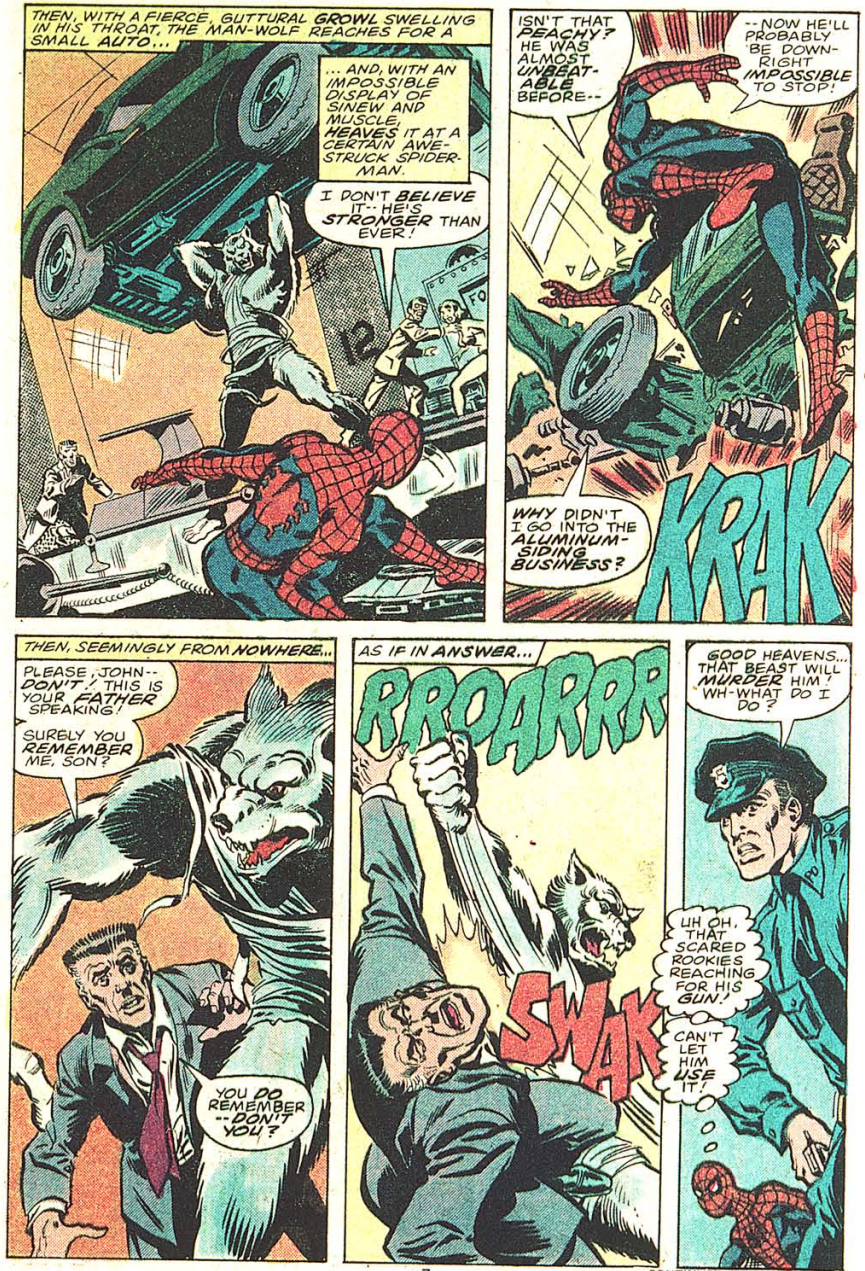

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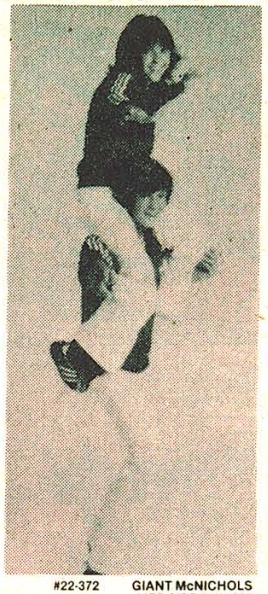

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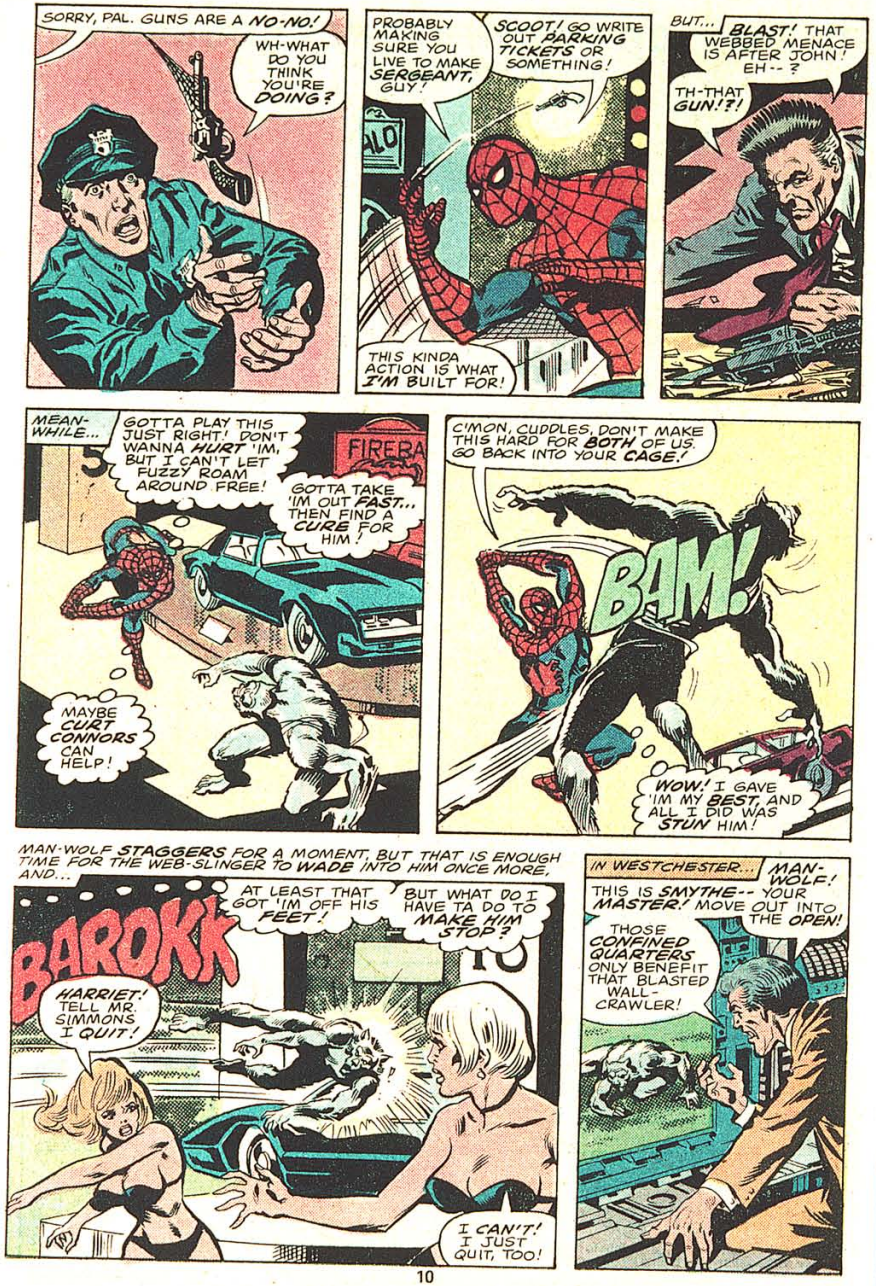

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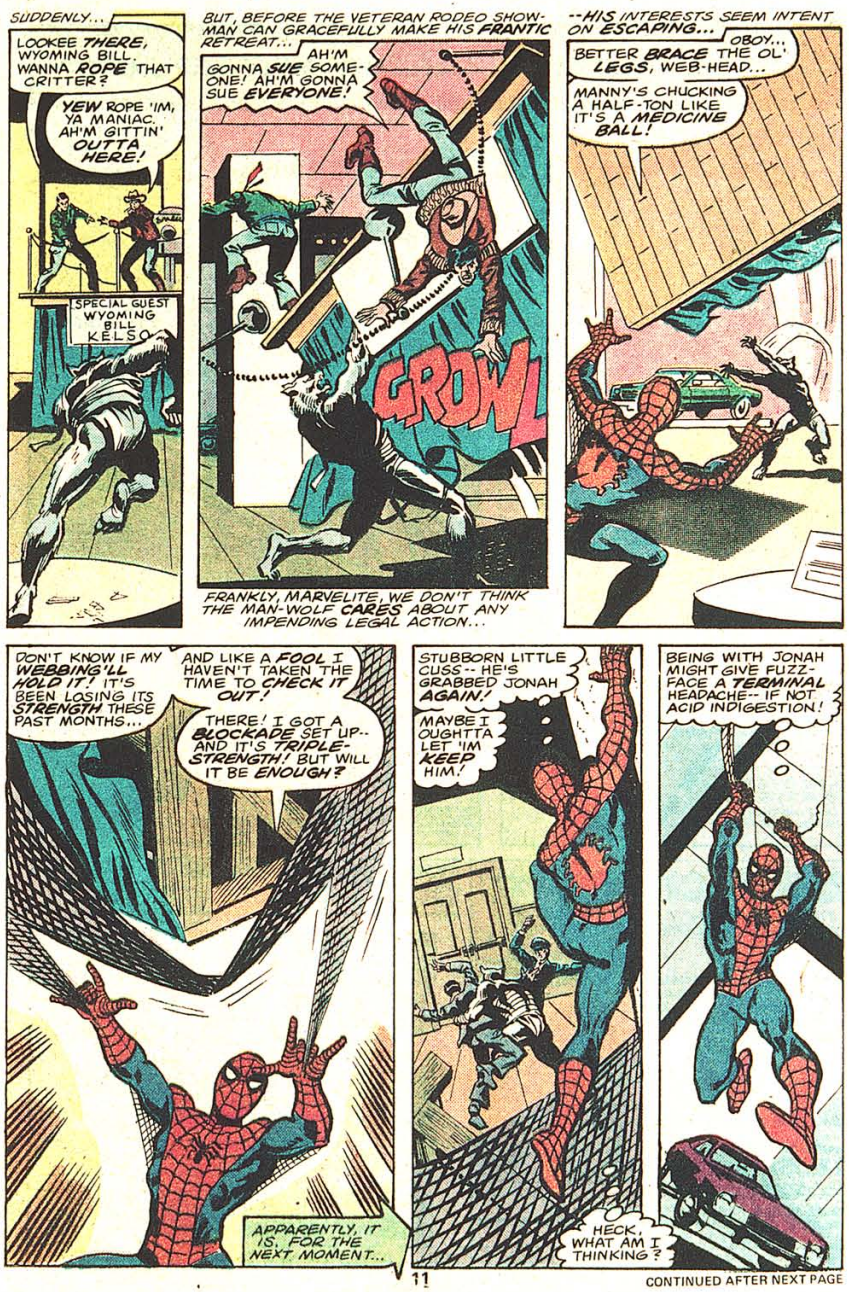

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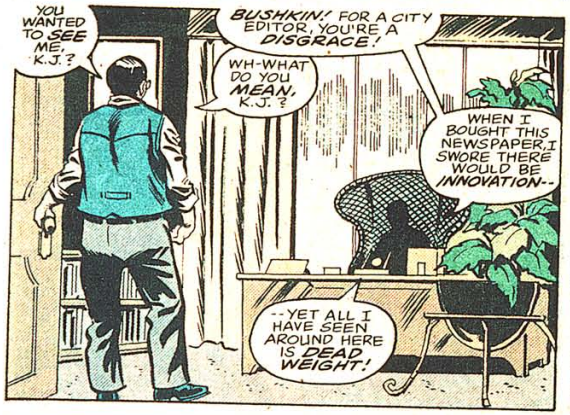

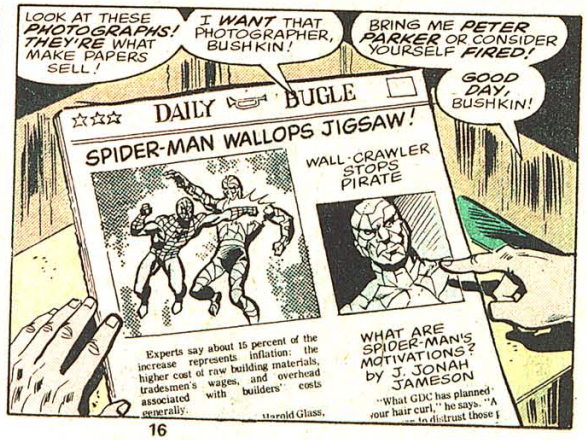

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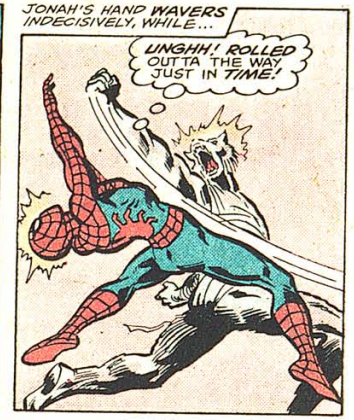

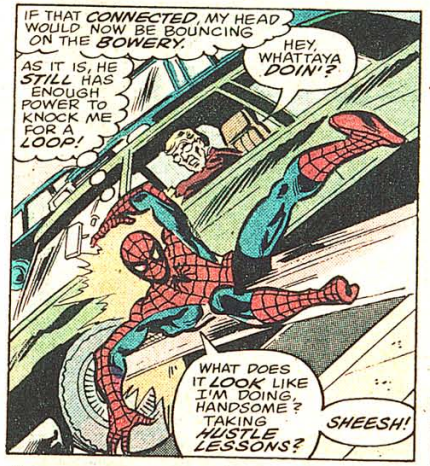

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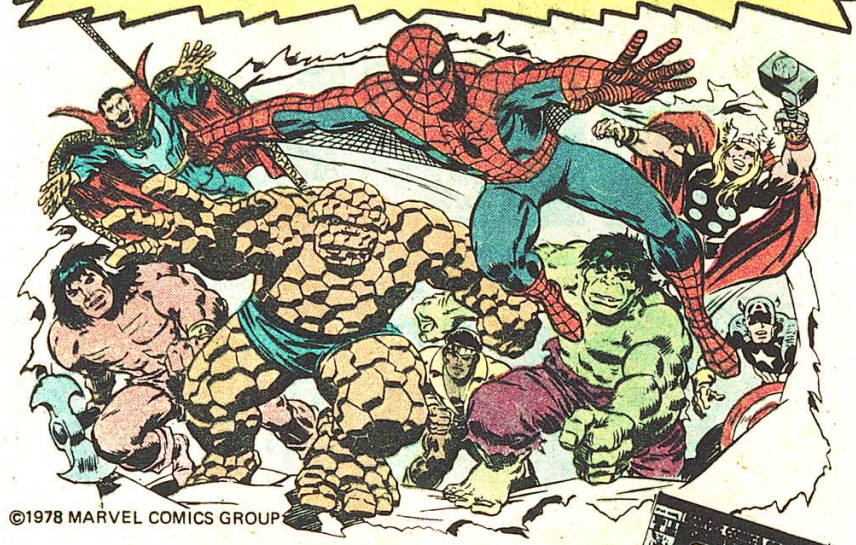

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MARV WOLFMAN
EDITOR
MARK GRUENWALD
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Because of the extra page in Spidey 187, our letters page was crowded out, so we're using this issue to catch up on your comments on both #'s 186 & 187. Take it away, Pilgrims...

Dear Marv, Keith & Mike,

Re: SPIDER-MAN #186. Stan Lee and Steve Ditko reborn! It was clearly planned that way! Marv wrote the kind of script Stan used to scribe back in Spidey's early days, complete with the same supporting cast. Keith and Mike produced that special kind of Ditko art with all Steve's trademark's. It was a great trip in Nostalgia, but best of all, it also had something I haven't seen since those old days: *Experimentation!*

Over the years this quality once so common in Spider-Man was abandoned. But it's back now, and it's welcome to stay. Who would've expected Spidey to be cleared? This development can open up whole new directions for the series. Just remember that not everyone will automatically *love* Spidey; there will still be some people who will hate him.

Anyway, "Chaos Is The Chameleon" is another winner, one of an unbroken string since Marv's arrival. I don't doubt we'll see more.

Matt Kaufman
303 W. Pennsylvania
Urbana, IL 61801

Dear Marv,

I'm very glad you're writing THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. The simple fact is, nobody tells a story like you do.

Spider-Man has come a long way in just two issues. Last issue he graduated, and this month the D.A. clears him. I always knew Tower was a right guy!

I read in *The Comic Reader* that Pete will become a teaching assistant. Perfect! That means they'll be new characters. That's always been one thing that bugged me—the only other student Pete ever got to know was Gwen Stacy. He must have met *somebody* in four years!

Don't patch things up between Pete and Mary Jane Watson. The plain truth is Pete can do better. Pete wants something more secure, so my guess is he'd also like someone a little brighter. My suggestion is that he play the field. Let him meet several girls, let him drift awhile. Meanwhile, think of all the fun you can have creating dates for him.

Specific comments about #186. I really liked the special guest appearance, but watch the continuity with the "Marvel Comics" of Marvel Comics. Are you serious about merchandisers? I'm sure you know Aunt May can live like a queen on web-shooter royalties, but how is Pete going to explain them? The rest of the issue was lots of fun, and Keith Pollard is a terrific choice for the art assignment.

Ah well, there's Thomas the superpro, Claremont's characters, Moench's elegance, and Mantlo's innovation. But nobody tells a story like Marv Wolfman.

Gregory Tiede
628 MacDuff Ave.
Stockton, CA 95210

Dear Folks,

Ahhh, after the TWO-IN-ONE Annual, we already knew Starlin could do a good Spidey, but it was sheer pleasure to see him do the layouts for "The Power Of Electro!" Captain America was treated well— his usual corny, ultra-straight self in contrast to Spidey's happy-go-lucky image.

But the real pleasure was in the pictures. Spidey's acrobatics on Pg. 6 captured the grace and style of Spider-Man in action almost as much as Ditko could.

I approve your lifting of Spidey's "wanted by the police" status last issue. I also approved of the Chameleon's revamping so now he is a true shape-shifter rather than a disguise villain.

In general, I approve of what you've been doing with Spidey (and Parker's) life lately. The return of Betty Brant, the breaking of Pete's and M.J.'s relationship, etc. Now just go a little farther—give him new supporting characters who have more ambivalent feelings towards Pete. He used to be Mr. Unpopular. Now every one of his contemporaries is a good friend.

Keep the periodic crises in Pete's life, but don't rehash the same ones.

Enough for now—you're doing good, Marv. But it could still be better.

Al Schroeder III
2207 Old Hickory Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37215

Dear Marvel,

The trouble with fill-ins or special guest artists is that they tend to carry on in the tradition of the regular artist and we end up with something not so special after all. So when Brunner or Adams does Conan, we get Buscema, BUT...

When Starlin does SPIDER-MAN, we get *DITKO!* The uncontested master of Spider-Man! The Starlin Spidey is a creature of the shadows, a primal force created by the forces of chaos and order, and unbelievably lithe and agile super-acrobat. He's lean and wiry, a striking comparison to the heavily muscled Captain America.

Then, of course, there's the Living Legend of World War Two, the human fighting machine developed to the peak of physical ability. Cap looked great here, and Electro was no slouch, either. When he burst out of his overcoat it was magnificent.

This was a superb issue of Spider-Man, the best in the last five years. May you have many more.

Beppe Sabatini
129 Gunson St. Apt 7
E. Lansing, MI 48823

Beppe and to all the others who noticed the "Ditko" look return to Spidey—when Marv took over the reigns of everyone's favorite Wall-crawler, he worked out with upcoming artist Keith Pollard to make that very change. Marv, Keith, Jim and John (the artists who did the last several issues) all grew up with Steve's rendition, and we were just dying to have it back.

A special thanks to Bob McLeod, however, must be given, 'cause the Electro story was layed-out by Jim Starlin more than a year ago (originally plotted with Marv as a TEAM-UP Fill In and then Marv tied it into Spidey's continuity after he took over the writing chores) and the layouts were very rough. Bob tied it all together in an absolutely incredible job.

What's coming up? Well, we've got a few surprises as Keith returns as our regular artist and we shift into high gear. Next month, the final-forever Spidey Slayer, and a couple of shocks we don't think anyone's prepared for.

One last thought before we close. . .it's just a little less than a year before we hit Spidey's 200th issue, and we challenge all you Spideyphiles to outguess Marv and Keith as to what our new titanic twosome have is store for the Web-slinger.

Be seeing you.

THEY CAME FROM INNER SPACE

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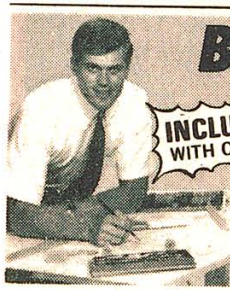

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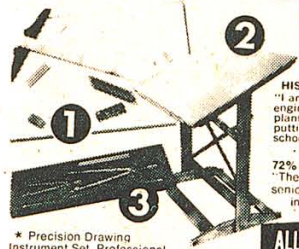

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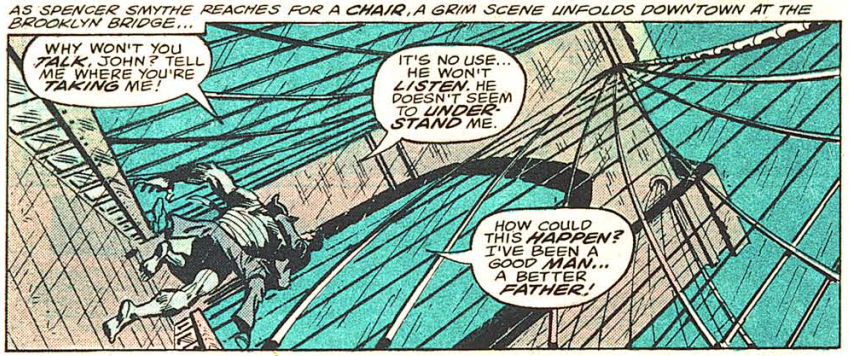

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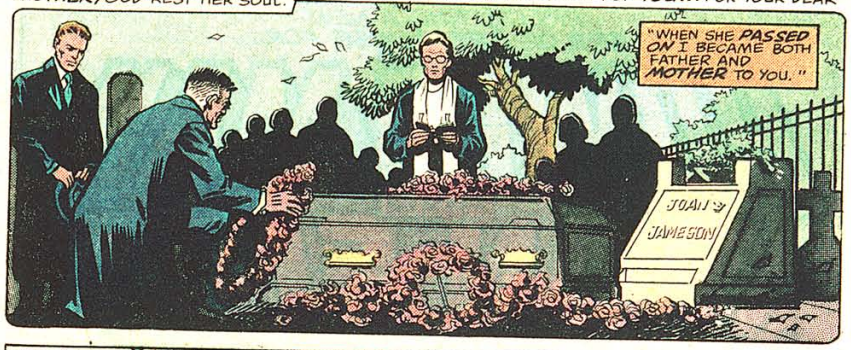

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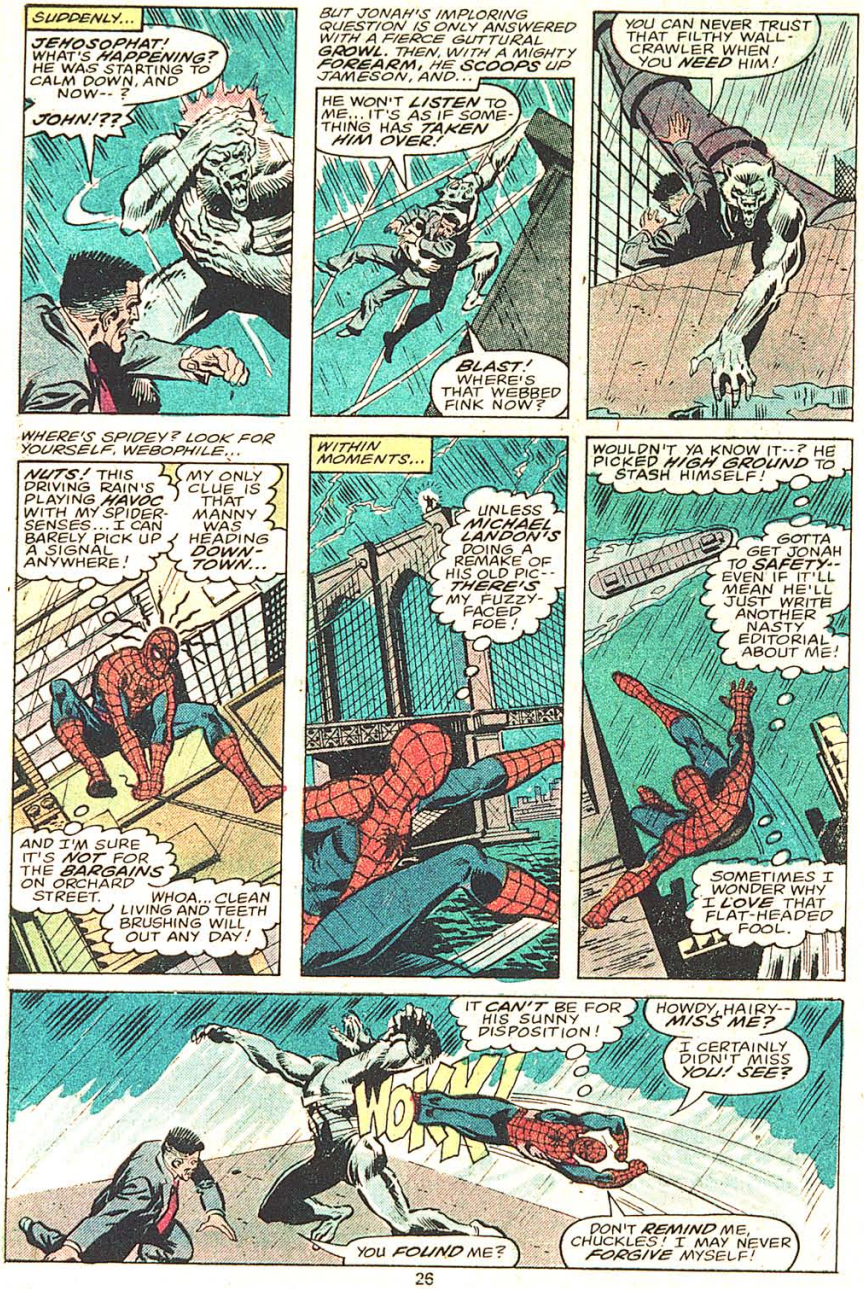

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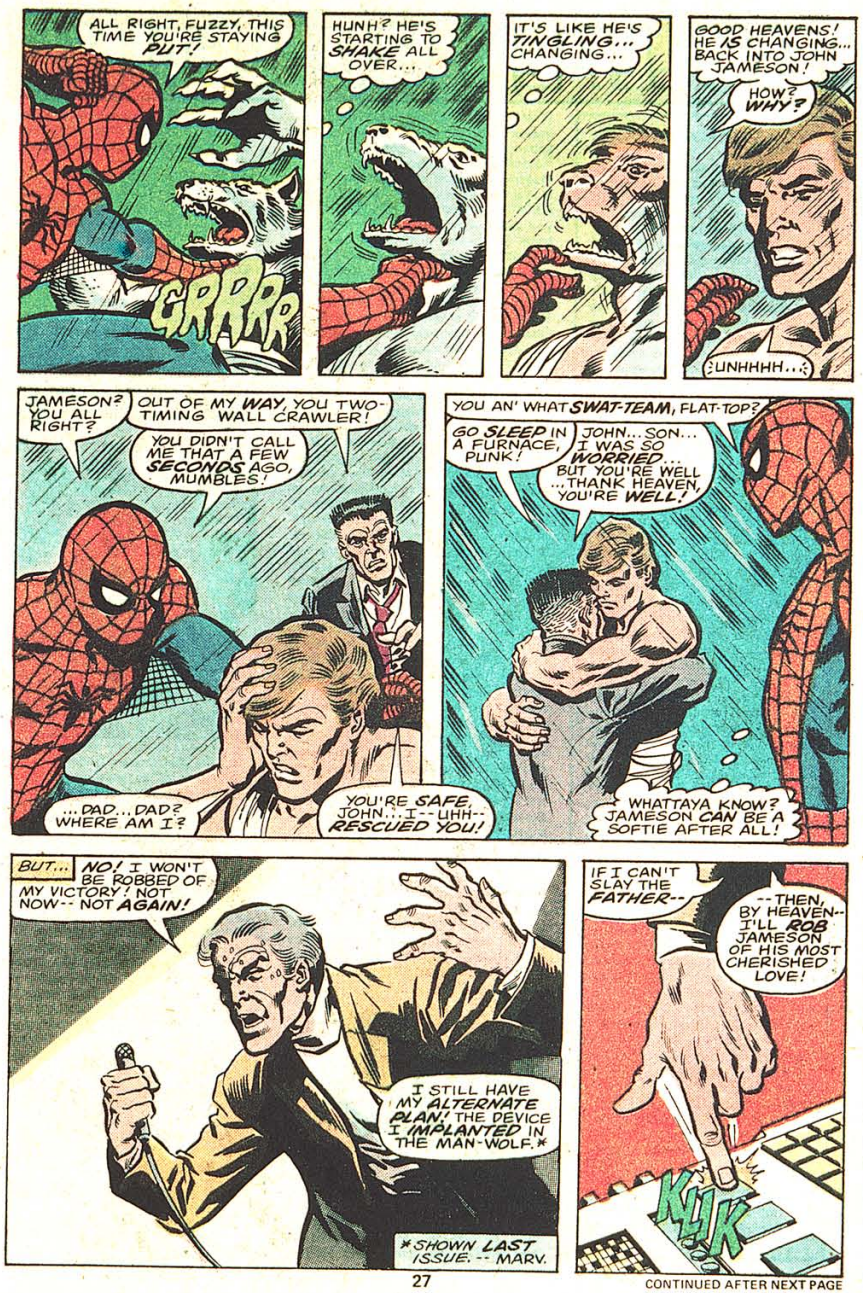

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BULLPEN BULLETINS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Okay, gang—the first thing you've gotta do is make sure you're alone in your room. Now, lock the doors and windows. What you are about to read is top secret and for the eyes of True Believers only. If this information were (perish forbid!) to fall into the hands of a competitive comicbook company (not that we care to admit we *have* any competition), the very foundations of literature as we know it would assuredly shrivel and crumble before your awestricken eyes! Therefore, remember you this— for what thou art about to peruse, thou art hereby pledged to deepest secrecy, in the hallowed name of Marveldom Assembled!

And now that we've done with the obligatory ceremonial trappings, let us proceed to the heart of the matter, namely— the exposé of the century— the revelation of the age — the unvarnished truth about the world's most famous non-entity— Honest Irving Forbush! Oh, how I wish this were but a script for one of our mags, so that I could title it "If This be Forbush!" Or, "There Shall Come a Forbush!" Or perhaps, "Let There be Forbush!" Well, you get the idea.

Years ago, about the time that MAD magazine was a'borning, yours truly produced a similar publication called SNAFU. Since the SATURDAY EVENING POST, in those days, had a line on the cover which read "Founded by Benjamin Franklin", it occured to me that SNAFU could do no less than have a similar line on its contents page. But whose name would I use? Well, after many sleepless nights I came up with the phrase "Founded by Irving Forbush". Why Irving Forbush? I've absolutely no idea! I never knew anyone with that name, nor particularly wanted to. It just had the right sound to me. Incidentally, wanting to go the POST one better, I added, on the other side of the contents column, the line "Losted by his cousin, Melvin Forbush", or some such name— it's hard to remember after all that time.

Anyway, years later when mighty Marvel was just beginning to conquer the entire literary universe, I thought 'twould be fun to bring back good ol' Irv and give him the fame and prominence he so richly deserved. So there you have it. A fantastically meaningful object lesson in how to create something out of nothing and keep it the same way! And, if any of you can make any sense out of the foregoing, then consider thyself thricely No-Prized! As for me, I'm off to have a hoedown with the Hulk!

Excelsior!

Stan

P.S. No! No! No! It isn't true that Forbush is Darth Vader spelled sideways.

ITEM! Lately, it seems that Marvel's mighty magazine line has become the talk of the known universe! We've gotten a veritable *mountain* of mail from all over, voicing thunderous approval of our full-color Super Special ventures like JAWS 2, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, and KISS 2. For more than a year now, we've been experimenting with better paper, new printing processes, new coloring techniques and special features (such as our four-page fold-out KISS poster!) and with each new project we gain experience, honing our skills. We at Marvel think we're on the threshhold of *revolutionizing* the comics industry with our somewhat-more-expensive but oh-so-beautiful magazines. In fact we have a whole bunch of mind boggling new Super-Specials and full-color *series* in the works right now, like SATANA, for instance, and STAR-LORD, and the long-awaited, Tolkienesque WEIRDWORLD magazine, written by Doug Moench, and *painted* in watercolors by Mike Ploog! We can't *wait* for you to see these dazzling offerings—and *that's* where the only problem lies. It seems that more than a few of the cards and letters deluging the ol' Bullpen bear complaints about the difficulties many of you have had in *locating* our Marvelous Magazines. The trouble is that not enough newsstands and magazine stores *carry* our masterworks, and some that *do* don't stock *all* of them. All we can say, friends, is that we're doing what we can from this end— the rest is up to *you*! If distribution of our comics and magazines isn't up to snuff in your area, let your local retailers *know* about it! Make them aware of just how many sales they're passing up. Better still, find out who the magazine distributors are in your area and drop *them* a line. Tell them the titles you want to see on the stands! Remember, it's up to you! And if all else fails, friend, don't forget that you can *subscribe* to *all* our regular titles. It's $4.50 for twelve issues of any 35¢ comic, and although one cannot yet subscribe to our glorious Super Specials (or annuals, or other one-shot special-type mags. . .sigh!) there is no reason at all to miss a single panel of the wonderment within SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN (12 issues for $13.00), CRAZY (12 issues for $8.50), MARVEL PREVIEW (4 issues for $4.50), or THE HULK, in full, scintillating color (6 issues for a mere $9.50). Address orders, with your check or money order enclosed, to Marvel Magazine Group Subscription Department, 575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10022. You'll be glad you did.

ITEM! The insiders' hot tip of the month— buy yourself a copy of DAREDEVIL #157. Some of you will likely recognize the guest-writer's name, though she's relatively new to the scripting biz, and once you've been dazzled by her inaugural effort, we're willing to bet that few of you will soon forget the lady's style!

ITEM! *The* event in comics this month has to be the arrival of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA #1, the premiere issue of what is sure to be one of Marvel's best and most popular series for a long, long time! *Ramblin'* ROGER McKENZIE, writer, and *Ever-ready* ERNIE COLON, artist, have *expanded* their already-acclaimed adaptation of the Battlestar Galactica TV movie to kick off the 35¢ color-comics series. You don't want to miss this one—so get on down to your newsstand *now*!

ITEM! Time to update the old Marvel Score cards again, gang. *Dubious* DANNY CRESPI, Former Dean of Letterers and production person par excellance, has risen to the elite status of Assistant Production Manager. Former APM, *Dependable* DAVE COHEN has gone West in pursuit of True Happiness and a career in music—so it's best of luck to two great guys!

ITEM! Speaking of Super Specials, there's one coming your way in late November that's bound to set your mind on end! We'll give you a hint—it's all about the adventures of a certain thief, reaver, and slayer, noteworthy for his gigantic melancholies and gigantic mirth, whose idea of fun is treading the jeweled thrones of the Earth under his sandaled feet. No, it isn't Howard the Duck (but keep your eyes open for Howie's Super Special debut). In fact, Marvel Super Special #9 features none other than CONAN THE BARBARIAN in the same snazzy full-color format as in his previous appearance in Super Special #2! There's a surprise *second feature* in this issue, which we won't give away just yet, but fans of peerless feminine pulchritude would be well advised to peruse it. It's only a buck and a half, for Forbush's sake!

Happy Holidays!

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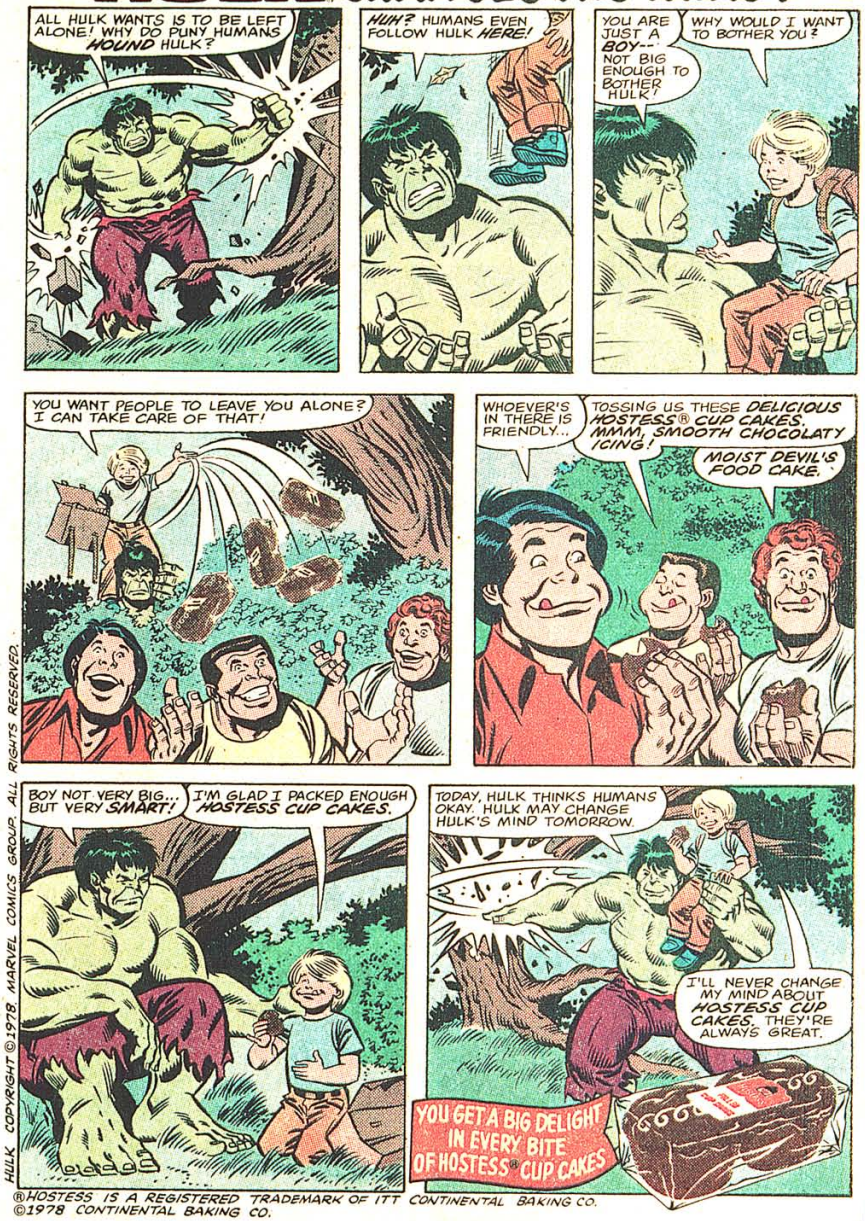

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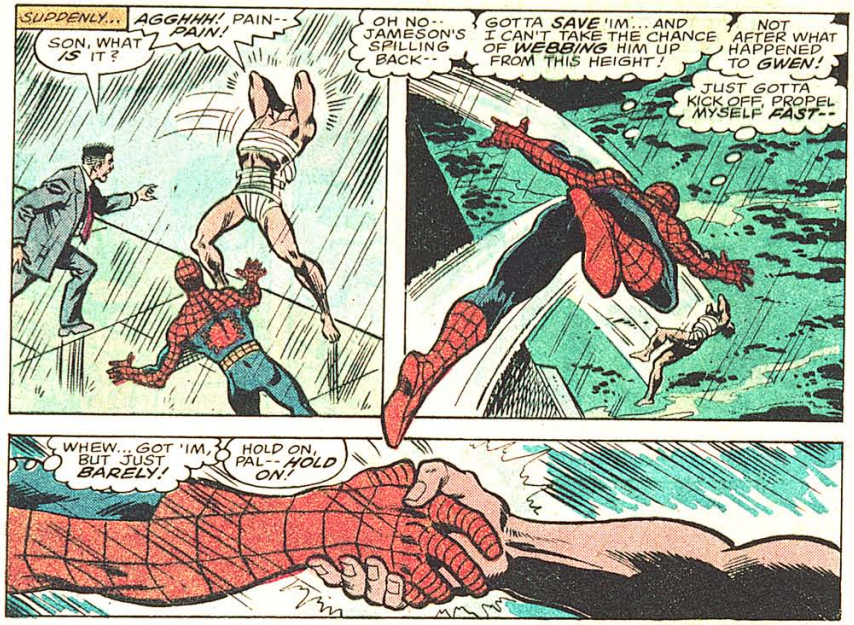

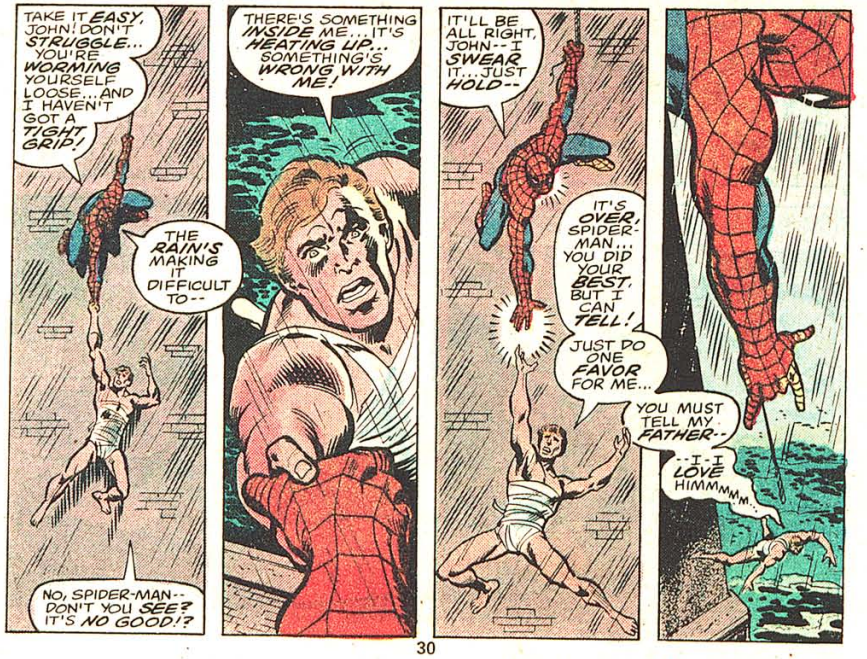

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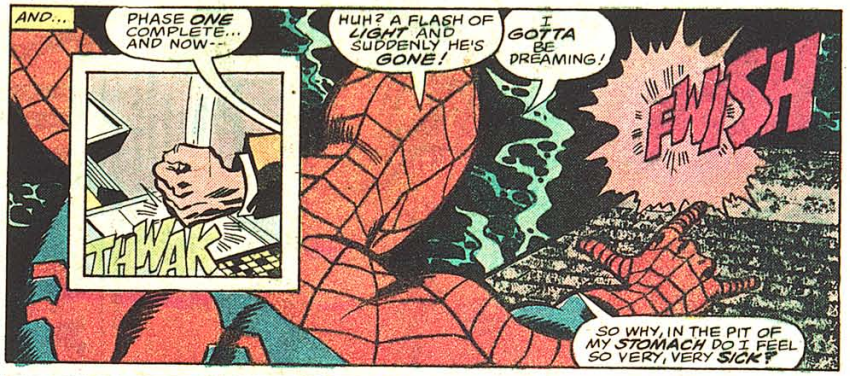

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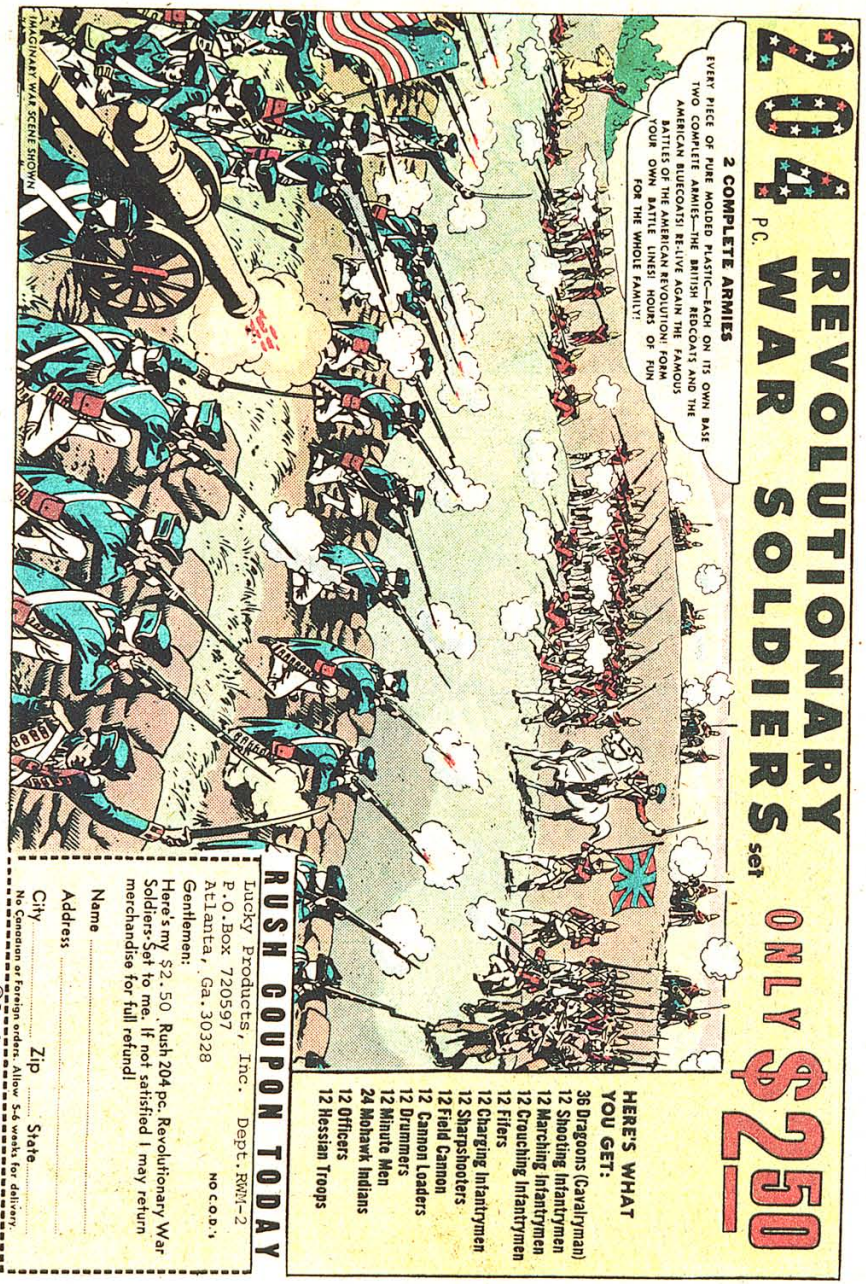

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